

*Paper written by Frank A. Kendall, Architect, (son-in-law of A.R. Esty) 1865-
Oct. 1934*

*Read at meeting of Framingham Historical and Natural History Society, Feb. 7,
1934*

With annotations in brackets by Alexandra Esty (Sanderson) Stocker, 2021.

Alexander Rice Esty, Architect (1826-1881), his early surroundings, his
professional Associates, his Friends and his Architectural Works.

Alexander Rice Esty, the younger of the two sons of Dexter Esty and Mary Rice, was born on October 18, 1826 in Framingham, where he made his home until his death in 1881, on July the second (the day that President Garfield was shot), except that during a part of his apprenticeship he lived in Roxbury. During the last year of his life, however, he spent much of his time in Washington where the cordial hospitality of the Hon. and Rev. Peter Parker and his wife and of Gov. and Mrs. Claflin, old and tried friends, made his stay a very pleasant one.

The Rice family had been in the adjoining town of Sudbury as early as 1639, and settled in Framingham two generations later, making generous contributions to its population and to its church and town interests.

Dexter Esty (1791-1860) in 1814 came from Newton to Framingham, where he followed his trade as master-carpenter. He was a well trained mechanic and like most builders of his day, Was well-versed in the post-colonial traditions, which he followed in his own work (including his own house, still standing and occupied by his granddaughter, Miss Emily Louise Rice). And he doubtless drew his own plans for most of his work.

Dexter Esty's elder son (1824-1912) was named in honor of Constantine Canaris, the hero of the Greek Revolution in the 1820's. He graduated from Yale College in 1845, became an able and successful lawyer and served in various town offices, in both branches of the State Legislature, in the Congress of the U.S. and as a Judge of the local Court. From a sketch of his brother's life, written at the time of the latter's death, I have from time to time quoted, or adapted its material.

The daughter of Dexter Esty, whom most of us knew as Mrs. Phineas Rice and some of us a kind and helpful neighbor, lived in her father's house with her husband and family until her death in 1915.

[AESS: The Esty name is not of Italian origin. The Esty family in New England was of English origin]. The Esty name is probably of Italian origin through the French [this is incorrect, the Esty family is of English origin]. Whether or not the presumption that it came down from that Azzo II (grandson of the Emperor Henry III), who became Duke of Milan and assumed the name of Este', is more than conjectural is too deep a Question for me or for the readers of this paper to solve; but the quiet humour that Mr. Esty expressed in occasionally signing his name on his drawings or in his books as E-s-t-e "acute" amused him. It was only one example of an unoffending pleasantry that made him a charming companion and friend. He seems to have had a genius for friendship.

Alexander Esty, the subject of this sketch, after attending the common school, entered the Framingham Academy, at that time a proprietary school, where his attendance coincided, in part at least, with the preceptorship of Marshall Conant.

Of the thirty-seven preceptors that presided over the Academy during the sixty years of its existence as a proprietary school, all but one were graduates of Harvard, Yale, Dartmouth, Amherst or Bates College. Marshall Conant alone had no degree, but tradition has been kinder to him than to any other (unless we except Carlos Slafter, the last of the preceptors, whom some of us remember as a visitor to the centennial foregathering of the Academy pupils in 1892).

Conant studied his pupils (to their advantage) as well as his books; he learned their trends, their tastes and their abilities. He treated them as individuals with individual talents.

He detected Aleck Esty's taste for drawing and encouraged it by sending him out to the Common from time to time to sketch the buildings around it. His first sketch of the stone house of Major Benjamin Wheeler was in existence until after his death, but has now disappeared.

Before continuing in biographical or logical order let us look at some of the surroundings of Framingham Common in the earlier decades of the last century. Apparently those decades were prosperous ones until the panic of 1837, and a comparison of early drawings with later maps confirms that assumption.

Most conspicuous among the newer buildings were the following eight structures of a similar style (either facing on or not far from the common), all but one of them still standing, and all of which were dignified and attractive examples of the so

called "Greek Revival", except the two Meeting Houses which were equally good examples of the earlier colonial type.

1. The third Meeting House of the First Parish, built in 1807, a colonial building, of which no adequate picture survives, was still standing during this period, More interesting perhaps than the best of pictures is the fact that in 1807 (recollect that at that time the Town and the Parish were one) the Town voted: - "that the selectmen dispose of the privilege of selling liquor during the raising of the new meeting house."

2. The John Ballard 2nd house (Mrs. Bean's) built about 1816, is of wood and the eaves on the street side rest on a two story colonnade.

3. The Simon Whitney house, (Dr. Stone's) built after 22, has now a colonnade at each end under the gables of a long unbroken roof.

4. The Baptist Meeting House, dedicated in 1827, is a wooden structure, following the Wren tradition. At the east end is a colonnade surmounted by a graceful tower and spire. There is a tradition that Solomon Willard was the architect. If so he may have had a hand in designing some at least of the other buildings.

5. The old Bank Building, built about 1833, has brick walls and a wooden colonnade under the gable that faces the street.

6. The Town House, built about 1834 by Dexter Esty, was (and is) of wood, and as originally built had Doric columns under the gable ends only, the northerly colonnade being a recent logical addition.

On a tablet near the entrance Solomon Willard, who designed the Bunker Hill Monument, is credited with the design although the Town History states that Dexter Hemenway, whom some of us remember as hale and hearty at over ninety, drew the plan and the committee forgot to pay him."

7. The Academy Building, built in 1837, has walls of a random rubble stone, with considerable seam faced atone, skillfully laid with horizontal and vertical joints, and forming a handsome face. The columns are neatly formed of the same character of stonework, unusual on a round surface, the capitals being of stone and the entablatures of wood.

8. The eighth building is the house of Benjamin Wheeler mentioned above and is built of stone resembling that in the Academy but with wooden columns and entablature. I refer to the house so long occupied by the kindly and courteous minister of the First Parish, the Rev. Charles A. Humphreys.

The varying arrangement of the colonnades and entablatures in these buildings form a veritable table of permutations and combinations.

I speak particularly of these buildings of the "Greek Revival" and post colonial period because, far from being influenced favorably by them, Mr. Esty in his practise seems to have avoided the execution of work in either the classic or colonial. fashion, and consistency in that respect led to a great disappointment near the end of his life.

The stone work in Mr. Esty's churches was always done with unusual care and was, and is, recognized as of the best, and in some cases closely resembles that with which he became familiar in the buildings around the Framingham Common.

By Mr. Conant's advice and through his recommendation the young man was apprenticed to Richard Bond, an architect of some note in Boston.

With a box, carefully built by his father, in place of a trunk, and marked with his initials, now in possession of his daughter, (the duplicate of one built for the elder brother, now in possession of the latter's grandson, Charles Alexander Esty) the apprentice left for Boston to begin his chosen career.

To quote from the obituary notice written by his brother—

"For some years he boarded in Roxbury with his employer and, with another young lad in the same office, walked into and from the city daily over the "Neck, in heats and colds, long before Chickering's factory had been constructed, and applied himself most faithfully to his duties."

At that time, unless travel and study in Europe (which few could afford) were possible, an apprenticeship was the only available manner of preparation for the profession of Architecture. There was no school of or even a course in Architecture in the United States, nor did any exist until the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1868 established a course in Architecture.

Compare this with the fact that today there are fifty institutions in the United States either entirely devoted to or furnishing at least a course in that subject.

To quote again—

" On arriving at age he spent some time in the office of Mr. Gridley J. F. Bryant, and then opened an office on his own account, and --- self dependent and self reliant, applied himself to his work, and gained an honorable reputation and a place in the front rank of his profession."

Those were days of disagreement as regarded religious matters, in Framingham as well as elsewhere in Massachusetts. In 1830 the conservatives had withdrawn from the First Parish and had built a very simple meeting house nearby.

The boys joined in the controversy, and the First Parish boys taunted the Hollis Evangelical boys by a piece of doggerel;-

"The Orthodox people
Without any steeple."

The rejoinder was equally poetic;-

"The Unitarian people
Have a fine high steeple
Stolen away
From the Orthodox people."

Whether this exchange of sentiment made for a friendly settlement or led to a livelier competition I do not know, but Mr. Esty, in 1848 remodeled the Hollis Evangelical building into the simple Gothic building afterwards known as Plymouth Church by adding the Gothic spire and using simple Gothic detail on and in the structure, which remained unchanged, so far as the main building is concerned, until the 1870's when the transepts were added by Mr. William A. Rice.

I have thus far mentioned three architects. It seems proper at this point to say something of them and of other architects with whom Mr. Esty was from time to time associated.

Of Richard Bond I have been unable to find any record at either the Boston Public, the Athenaeum, the Harvard College or Historic Genealogical Libraries.

Solomon Willard (1783-1861) Among his important works are the Hollis Street Meeting House and St. Paul's Church in Boston.

Willard's masterpiece was the Bunker Hill Monument, and his design for a simple, dignified granite shaft of correct proportions saved posterity from having to look at an incongruous classic column with nothing to support, perched above its surroundings, and from other ornate but unmeaning designs that were submitted.

Besides refusing compensation for his work, and for his services from 1824 to 1841, he contributed generously to its erection.

Amos A. Lawrence (perhaps forgetting his own activities) said "Posterity ought to know that they are indebted more to Solomon Willard than to any other person for this monument."

Gridley J. F. Bryant is not to be confused with his father, Gridley Bryant, the engineer who invented special movable derricks at the Quincy quarries in order to lower the granite for the monument some eighty feet, constructed the railroad to the Neponset River, and later became involved in ruinous lawsuits with some of the earlier railroad companies, and especially with Ross Winans.

Gridley J. F. Bryant, the son, was a well-established architect in Boston before 1848, but I have found little on record as to his work until he was engaged as Architect for the enlargement of the State House in 1853 and 1854, which, although it nearly doubled the area of the building, did not extend it laterally beyond the ends of the original structure. And the Bulfinch front remained intact until a generation later.

Mr. Esty was in Mr. Bryant's employ during a part at least of the fifties and undoubtedly assisted in the preparation of the drawings for the work just described.

Although the intimacy, and to some extent the association of the two men continued until Mr. Esty's death I find no evidence of any formal partnership with Mr. Bryant (or with any other architect) nor do I find any drawings signed by both together except the perspectives of the proposed State House extension of 1867-8 referred to later on.

I called on Mr. Bryant once about 1893 or 4 at his office in 35 Congress St. where both men had their offices after the fire of 1871, He was quite infirm and had little

to say. He cautioned me that an architect's chief reliance for success lay in the possession of influential clients, a statement that it is safe to believe, with the reservation that success gained honestly with talent behind it must make success surer and more gratifying. Mr. Bryant, though a much older man, outlived Mr. Esty by more than ten years.

Here I may properly speak of two architects who were trained in Mr. Esty's office, Mr. William A. Rice and Mr. Walter Frank Hurd.

Mr. Rice was a native of Framingham. Mr. Hurd came to Framingham with his parents as a boy. Mr. Hurd was for a time chief draughtsman for Mr. Esty. Both did work in association with him and each with the other.

And in order to complete the story of Mr. Esty's association with others before dealing with his individual practise let me speak of the two most important projects with which he had to deal – the proposed enlargement of the State House in Boston in 1867 and his connection with the Library of Congress.

In 1867 Governor Alexander H. Bullock appointed the Hon. John H. Clifford (former Attorney General and Governor) with the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House, to inquire and report concerning the whole project of remodeling or rebuilding the State House.

The Committee reported that they had “invited the co-operation and assistance of Messrs. Gridley J. F. Bryant and Alexander R. Esty, not only from considerations of eminent professional experience and skill, but also from the thorough familiarity of the former with the construction.”

Three plans with their estimated costs were submitted;-

No. 1. To enlarge without projecting beyond the existing front line and without enlarging the Hall of Representatives.
(\$ 341,307)

No. 2. To enlarge the Hall of Representatives southerly and thoroughly remodeling the interior.
(\$ 759,725)

No.3. An entirely new structure
(\$ 2,042, 574)

These were carefully and honestly prepared reports and the estimates were made by contractors who as late as my early days in Boston were still in business and of the highest reputation.

Neither of the reports, however, was accepted as the expense was deemed more than was wise to incur.

History repeated itself, however, and at the next session of the Legislature a single new Commissioner and a new architect were appointed. Certain internal alterations and improvements were authorized, an appropriation made and the work executed. The estimates were largely exceeded, a scandal was shown up and those involved were severely rebuked by the Governor;- not the first or the last time that proof has been shown that although "figures will not lie liars will figure."

In 1880 Mr. Esty with two other architects, Edward Clark and J. L. Smithmeyer, were appointed by a senatorial committee, of which the well-known Senator Voorhees was chairman, as a commission to consider and report as to the expediency of extending the United States Capitol so as to provide for the rapidly growing Congressional Library which was then located in the Capitol on its easterly side.

The Committee reported unanimously that in their opinion it was inexpedient if not impracticable to extend the Capitol as suggested without serious damage to its architectural proportions and its convenience for legislative purposes, The architects were then asked to make designs for a separate library building.

I do not know the exact process that followed. The result was that the plan submitted by Mr. Esty was accepted and "premiated" [given a prize for] by the Committee who asked Mr. Esty to collaborate with Mr. Smithmeyer as to the exterior design.

This Mr. Esty refused to do. Unfortunately he had produced a design in the style that was living a short life in England, as typified by the Albert Memorial, an unfortunate and unskillful attempt to modernize the Gothic.

Mr. Esty declined to collaborate, but his plan was adopted, and was adapted by Messrs. Smithmeyer & Pelz to the simpler classic style, which of course was more harmonious with the public architecture of Washington. The result was the disappointment referred to in the early part of this paper.

Nevertheless the success of the building as a usefully planned and successful Library is due to Mr. Esty's plan, which without radical changes appears in the completed building.

At this time Mr. Esty was suffering from a mortal ailment, and he returned to his home in Framingham to live but a short time.

At this point I will insert a letter from Mr. Henry R. Kendall whom I have known and respected for many years, an Architect of eminence in Boston for whom the members of his profession have not only regard but also affection.

209 Columbus Avenue, Boston, Mass.

Mr. Frank A. Kendall,
5 Church Street,
Framingham, Mass.

My earliest remembrance of Alex R. Esty is of him as a member of the Boston Society of Architects who always paid his dues. In those days, in the depression which followed the activities after the Boston Fire, Architects were often hard put to meet the fees of membership in professional societies and I, as a student in an Architects' office, took the job of collecting them as a side line. Most offices then were up three *or* four flights of stairs and the current word was that on earth the Architect lived as near heaven as possible, being not too sure of a nearer position hereafter. Hence, the collector blessed the name of those who paid on the first call. I remember Mr. Hurd, who seemed to be the principal assistant, a very competent man, by the way.

My more intimate acquaintance began later when Mr. Esty was Superintendent of Construction for the addition to the Post Office Building facing on P. O. Square. The office of the Supervising Architect of the Treasury was undergoing one of the periodical investigations and John Frazer was Acting Supervising Architect. On assuming office, he found himself in need of additional assistants and asked Mr. Esty to suggest some one. Just how my name came to his notice I am not sure, but some one mentioned it to him and he sent for me and offered me the chance. His recommendation was enough and with the help of such other sponsors as I could hastily get together I made a flying start in February 1879 and landed in Washington in time to draw pay for Washington's birthday, much to my surprise.

Mr. Esty's introductions and counsel brought me friends there at once and undoubtedly helped me greatly to get a standing.

My first work was on plans for the Boston building, already started, and the design (by Louis R. Rogers, then chief draughtsman, formerly of Bryant and Rogers of Boston) was decided upon but to me fell much of the detail of working drawings.

This brought me somewhat in close touch with the Superintendent of Construction and in my vacations I was often in his office and in touch with him. He was one of the old style of professional men, full of courtesy and consideration, whom it was always a pleasure to meet.

There was not much I could do for him. He did not need me but I wished I could do more. He once asked me to try and secure for him his premiated designs for the Congressional Library Competition.

The great feature of the design was the circular, domed Reading Hall which was incorporated in the adopted designs but for which, so far as I know, he never received credit or acknowledgment. The authorities would not release the plans, however, and they never came back.

The news of Mr. Esty's death caused genuine regret in the office of the Supervising Architect and knowing my personal affection for him, I was permitted to attend the funeral, representing the office.

I came to Boston and Framingham, attended the services with the friends who so deeply mourned his passing but was not able to meet, at the time, any of the family.

In his passing the profession lost an honored member and a host of his friends a well loved and faithful comrade.

Sincerely yours,
Henry H. Kendall,

And now as to his individual. practice as differentiated from his collaboration with others.

And first let me say a few words as to the difficulties of practise in those days as compared with conditions today. I shall name only one item out of many, the non-

existence of blue prints or of any other time and money saving method of reproducing drawings.

Even in my own early days, forty years later than Mr. Esty's, only comparatively small drawings could be reproduced except by the laborious and expensive process of tracing. Such comparatively small prints as could be made were made by the office boy, who coated the paper in a dark room, hung it up to dry, tended the heavy frames on an extension of the window sill or on the roof; and it took from a Quarter an hour to nearly all day, depending on the sun, to produce a single print.

Today blue prints can be obtained from a printing office in from fifteen minutes *up*, depending only on the required number of each print.

Alexander Esty became of age in October 1847, when we may assume that his apprenticeship ended. In that year the third building of the First Parish was superseded by a Gothic building designed by Hammat Billings. It seems fair to assume that this building may have influenced the young architect in favor of the Gothic which he used in most of his churches, for in the following year, as has been stated, he remodeled the Hollis Evangelical Meeting House into the simple Gothic structure now known as Plymouth Church.

I will mention next the dwelling houses in Framingham only that Mr. Esty is known to have designed.

- The David Fisk house, the home of the late Mrs. Sarah Fisk White. Mr. Esty's niece. Mrs. Stockwell tells me that this was Mr. Esty's first house.
- The house now owned by Mr. Wallace Nutting was thoroughly remodeled into its present condition by Mr. Esty for James Wilson Clark.
- The George H. Weeks house, originally built by Charles Merriam for his daughter, Mrs. Francis Jaques.
- The William H. Mellen House.
- The house of the Rev. and Hon. Peter Parker at Salem End (I wonder whether that designation of the west part of the town is as familiar as it ought to be) built by
- Mr. Esty's brother-in-law, Mr. Phineas G. Rice, in 1867-8.

- Mr. Esty's own house on High Street---destroyed when the speedway was built.
- The Moses Ellis House now owned by Little Tree Farms (built by Mr. Rice)
- The Hon. C. C. Esty house, on State St. where the Allyn family live.
- The house on Union Avenue, long owned by Mr. F. J. Stevens, where Mr. Lowery now lives.
- The Lorenzo Sabine house on Auburn St., next beyond Dr. A. K. Stone's was built by Dexter Esty about 1850. It may have been designed by his son, who was just beginning practise.
- The house now owned by Mr. Charles A. Esty as originally built for Charles R. Train was of Mr. Esty's design, but it was so largely rebuilt after a disastrous fire that the original design is not apparent.

I have no doubt that there were other houses that should be recorded, but it would require considerable time to identify them.

Schools.

Most of Mr. Esty's schools have of course been superseded by others of a more modern type and conforming to the improved standards of present day practice.

Among the Schools designed by him are the following:

- Normal Schools in Framingham and Worcester, Mass.
- Normal School dormitory in Westfield, Mass.
- A group of buildings at Colby University in Waterville, Maine
- Baptist Theological School in Newton, Mass.
- A School building in Clinton, Mass.
- Vermont University in Burlington, Vermont.
- A group of buildings in Alton, Illinois for Shurtleff College.
 - This college was named in honor of Benjamin Shurtleff who had given a generous endowment. He was a cousin in an older generation of our townsman, the Rev. A. D. K. Shurtleff.

- The first building of the University of Rochester, N.Y., which gave Mr. Esty a degree of Master of Arts.

City Buildings.

I find little record of the city buildings other than the churches. I am sure however that a number of such buildings were designed in his office, some of which were destroyed in the great fire.

The Monks Building at 35 Congress St. was built after the fire.

The Monks Building in South Boston still standing was also designed by Mr. Esty.

Some of his buildings were torn down after the advent of the steel frame made it possible to build much higher buildings in place of the older ones.

The Boston and Albany Station, still standing, but no longer used for its original purpose, was the last building that Mr. Esty designed.

And lastly we come to the churches of which there exists a longer list than of any other class, and most of which are still standing.

The remodeling that produced Plymouth has already been referred to.

In 1854 the Baptist Church in South Framingham was built, suggestive of the Romanesque.

In 1861 Emmanuel Church in Newbury St., Boston was built. It was afterwards enlarged by Francis R. Allen, an eminent architect, who paid Mr. Esty the high compliment of respecting the original design in every respect, repeating the detail, duplicating the entrances; -- a practice that is too little followed in treating a predecessor's design.

Other churches of Mr. Esty's design are as follows:-

- 1861 A Methodist Episcopal Church in Burlington, Vermont; Romanesque.
- 1866 The Church of Our Saviour, Longwood; Gothic. Built for the Lawrence family and considered one of Mr. Esty's best churches.
- 1866 Baptist Church in Rochester, New York.
- 1870 Baptist Church in North Billerica, Mass., for Gov. Talbot.

- 1868-9 Baptist Church in Upper Alton, Illinois.
- 1870 Congregational Church in Longmeadow~ remodeled from a colonial to a Romanesque design. It is amusing to learn that only last year another architect remodeled it back again into a colonial building.
- 1872-3 St. Lukes Church, Episcopalian, East Greenwich, R.I. The tower was added later by another architect .
- 1870 St. Johns Church, Framingham. English Gothic of a simple type. I shall speak of this again.
- 1876-8 St. Marks Church, Southborough.
- Union Congregational Church, Corner of Columbus Ave. and West Newton St., Boston. Gothic.
- The Harvard Church, Cambridge. Baptist. Gothic.

Mr. Ralph Adams Cram writes;

"Esty's work like that of Haight and Congdon was an intelligent working out of the Gothic principles then being revived in England.

"As a citizen Mr. Esty was public spirited and took pride in the growth and increasing attractions of his native town. The satisfactory manner in which he and his performed their arduous and responsible duties as selectmen during the Civil War (during the latter part of which he was chairman of the board) were recognized by the Town at that time, by his election in 1866 as Representative in the General Court."

He served ten years as Trustee of the Edgell Grove Cemetery, taking great interest in its improvement and management, and he designed the entrance gateway.

I find warrants as "Justice of the Peace and Quorum."

In 1876 he was appointed (vice Gridley J. F. Bryant, resigned) Superintendent of the erection of the United States Post Office and Sub-Treasury Building in Boston.

In 1877 his duties were extended to the superintendence of all U.S. Construction in Boston and of the U.S. Marine Hospital in Chelsea.

In 1878 Governor Alexander H. Rice appointed him a member of the Board of Prisons in place of his friend Dr. Joseph Burnett of Southborough.

Mr. Esty was three times married; first to Julia M. Wight, of whose three children Mrs. Charles W. Emerson survives together with the latter's husband, four children and four grandchildren;- second to Charlotte Louisa Blake;- and third to Emma Corning Newell; of her three children (Blanche Newell, Marguerite and Harold Morton) the first named, now Mrs. Frank A. Kendall survives with her daughter, Margaret;-- also survive two children of Harold Morton Esty, Elberta Larkin and Harold Morton Junior.

I have mentioned St. Johns Church in Framingham among the churches that Mr. Esty designed. It deserves further notice because of his affection for it and for what it represented to him.

Services of the Episcopal Church were first introduced into Framingham in the "fifties".

Mrs. Stockwell kindly writes me:-

"The first service of the Episcopal Church was held one Sunday afternoon in the then "Hollis Evangelical Church". I myself was there in the Esty pew with "Aunt Julia" and Dr. Burnett. Later on the services were held in the Town Hall."

Mr. Esty was attracted by the services, his interest grew and when St. Johns Church was incorporated (in 1860) he was one of the incorporators and was elected as the first Junior Warden, an office which he held until his death in 1881, the first Senior Warden, Dr. James Watson Brown, having survived him.

Mr. Esty took great pains in designing the building and in superintending its erection, and contributed generously toward the cost of the site as well as toward the building and to its support. St. John's Church and its welfare became and remained one of the absorbing interests of his life.

Alexander Rice Esty, Architect (1826-1881), his early surroundings, his professional Associates, his Friends and his Architectural Works.

Alexander Rice Esty, the younger of the two sons of Dexter Esty and Mary Rice, was born on October 18, 1826 in Framingham, where he made his home until his death in 1881, on July the second (the day that President Garfield was shot), except that during a part of his apprenticeship he lived in Roxbury. During the last year of his life, however, he spent much of his time in Washington where the cordial hospitality of the Hon. and Rev. Peter Parker and his wife and of Gov. and Mrs. Claflin, old and tried friends, made his stay a very pleasant one.

The Rice family had been in the adjoining town of Sudbury as early as 1639, and settled in Framingham two generations later, making generous contributions to its population and to its church and town interests.

Dexter Esty (1791-1860) in 1814 came from Newton to Framingham, where he followed his trade as master-carpenter. He was a well trained mechanic and like most builders of his day, was well-versed in the post-colonial traditions, which he followed in his own work (including his own house, still standing and occupied by his granddaughter, Miss Emily Louise Rice). And he doubtless drew his own plans for most of his work.

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3. The Simon Whitney house, (Dr.Stone's) built after 1822, has now a colonnade at each end under the gables of a long unbroken roof.
4. The Baptist Meeting House, dedicated in 1827, is a wooden structure, following the Wren tradition. At the east end is a colonnade surmounted by a graceful tower and spire. There is a tradition that Solomon Willard was the architect. If so he may have had a hand in designing some at least of the other buildings.
5. The old Bank Building, built about 1833, has brick walls and a wooden colonnade under the gable that faces the street.

6. The Town House, built about 1834 by Dexter Esty, was (and is) of wood, and as originally built had Doric columns under the gable ends only, the northerly colonnade being a recent logical addition.

On a tablet near the entrance Solomon Willard, who designed the Bunker Hill Monument, is credited with the design although the Town History states that Dexter Hemenway, whom some of us remember as hale and hearty at over ninety, "drew the plan and the committee forgot to pay him."

7. The Academy Building, built in 1837, has walls of a random rubble stone, with considerable seam faced stone, skillfully laid with horizontal and vertical joints, and forming a handsome face. The columns are neatly formed of the same character of stonework, unusual on a round surface, the capitals being of stone and the entablatures of wood.

8. The eighth building is the house of Benjamin Wheeler mentioned above and is built of stone resembling that in the Academy but with wooden columns and entablature.

I refer to the house so long occupied by the kindly and courteous minister of the First Parish, the Rev. Charles A. Humphreys.

The varying arrangement of the colonnades and entablatures in these buildings form a veritable table of permutations and combinations.

I speak particularly of these buildings of the "Greek Revival" and post colonial period because, far from being influenced favorably by them, Mr. Esty in his practise seems to have avoided the execution of work in either the classic or colonial fashion, and consistency in that respect led to a great disappointment near the end of his life.

The stone work in Mr. Esty's churches was always done with unusual care and was, and is, recognized as of the best, and in some cases closely resembles that with which he became familiar in the buildings around the Framingham Common.

By Mr. Conant's advice and through his recommendation the young man was apprenticed to Richard Bond, an architect of some note in Boston.

With a box, carefully built by his father, in place of a trunk, and marked with his initials,--now in possession of his daughter, (the duplicate of one built for the elder brother, now in possession of the latter's grandson, Charles Alexander Esty) the apprentice left for Boston to begin his chosen career.

To quote from the obituary notice written by his brother--

"For some years he boarded in Roxbury with his employer and, with another young lad in the same office, walked into and from the city daily over the "Neck", in heats and colds, long before Chickering's factory had been constructed, and applied himself most faithfully to his duties."

At that time, unless travel and study in Europe (which few could afford) were possible, an apprenticeship was the only available manner of preparation for the profession of Architecture. There was no school of or even a course in Architecture in the United States, nor did any exist until the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1868 established a course in Architecture.

Compare this with the fact that today there are fifty institutions in the United States either entirely devoted to or furnishing at least a course in that subject.

To quote again--

"On arriving at age he spent some time in the office of Mr. Gridley J.F. Bryant, and then opened an office on his own account, and --- self dependent and self reliant, applied himself to his work, and gained an honorable reputation and a place in the front rank of his profession."

Those were days of disagreement as regarded religious matters, in Framingham as well as elsewhere in Massachusetts. In 1830 the conservatives had withdrawn from the First Parish and had built a very simple meeting house nearby.

The boys joined in the controversy, and the First Parish boys taunted the Hollis Evangelical boys by a piece of doggerel;-

"The Orthodox people
Without any steeple."

The rejoinder was equally poetic;-

"The Unitarian people
Have a fine high steeple
Stolen away
From the Orthodox people."

Whether this exchange of sentiment made for a friendly settlement or led to a livelier competition I do not know, but Mr. Esty, in 1848 remodelled the Hollis Evangelical building into the simple Gothic building afterwards known as Plymouth Church by adding the Gothic spire and using simple Gothic detail on and in the structure, which remained unchanged, so far as the main building is concerned, until the 1870's when the transepts were added by Mr. William A. Rice.

I have thus far mentioned three architects. It seems proper at this point to say something of them and of other architects with whom Mr. Esty was from time to time associated.

Of Richard Bond I have been unable to find any record at either the Boston Public, the Athenaeum, the Harvard College or Historic-Genealogical Libraries.

Solomon Willard (1783-1861) Among his important works are the Hollis Street Meeting House and St. Paul's Church in Boston.

Willard's masterpiece was the Bunker Hill Monument, and his design for a simple, dignified granite shaft of correct proportions saved posterity from having to look at an incongruous classic column with nothing to support, perched above its surroundings, and from other ornate but unmeaning designs that were submitted.

Besides refusing compensation for his work, and for his services from 1824 to 1841, he contributed generously to its erection.

Amos A. Lawrence (perhaps forgetting his own activities) said -- "Posterity ought to know that they are indebted more to Solomon Willard than to any other person for this monument."

Gridley J. F. Bryant is not to be confused with his father, Gridley Bryant, the engineer who invented special movable derricks at the Quincy quarries in order to lower the granite for the monument some eighty feet, constructed the railroad to the Neponset River, and later became involved in ruinous lawsuits with some of the earlier railroad companies, and especially with Ross Winans.

Gridley J. F. Bryant, the son, was a well-established architect in Boston before 1848, but I have found little on record as to his work until he was engaged as Architect for the enlargement of the State House in 1853 and 1854, which, although it nearly doubled the area of the building, did not extend it laterally beyond the ends of the original structure. And the Bulfinch front remained intact until a generation later.

Mr. Esty was in Mr. Bryant's employ during a part at least of the fifties and undoubtedly assisted in the preparation of the drawings for the work just described.

Although the intimacy, and to some extent the association of the two men continued until Mr. Esty's death I find no evidence of any formal partnership with Mr. Bryant (or with any other architect) nor do I find any drawings signed by both together except the perspectives of the proposed State House extension of 1867-8 referred to later on.

I called on Mr. Bryant once about 1893 or 4 at his office in 35 Congress St. where both men had their offices after the fire of 1871. He was quite infirm and had little to say. He cautioned me that an architect's chief reliance for success lay in the possession of influential clients, a statement that it is safe to believe, with the reservation that success gained honestly with talent behind it must make success surer and more gratifying. Mr. Bryant, though a much older man, outlived Mr. Esty by more than ten years.

Here I may properly speak of two architects who were trained in Mr. Esty's office, Mr. William A. Rice and Mr. Walter Frank Hurd.

Mr. Rice was a native of Framingham. Mr. Hurd came to Framingham with his parents as a boy. Mr. Hurd was for a time chief draughtsman for Mr. Esty. Both did work in association with him and each with the other.

And in order to complete the story of Mr. Esty's association with others before dealing with his individual practise let me speak of the two most important projects with which he had to deal -- the proposed enlargement of the State House in Boston in 1867 and his connection with the Library of Congress.

In 1867 Governor Alexander H. Bullock appointed the Hon. John H. Clifford (former Attorney General and Governor) with the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House, to inquire and report concerning the whole project of remodelling or rebuilding the State House.

The Committee reported that they had "invited the co-operation and assistance of Messrs. Gridley J. F. Bryant and Alexander R. Esty, not only from considerations of eminent professional experience and skill, but also from the thorough familiarity of the former with the construction."

Three plans with their estimated costs were submitted;-

No. 1. To enlarge without projecting beyond the existing front line and without enlarging the Hall of Representatives. (\$ 341,307)

No. 2. To enlarge the Hall of Representatives southerly and thoroughly remodelling the interior. (\$ 759,725)

No. 3. An entirely new structure (\$ 2,042,574)

These were carefully and honestly prepared reports and the estimates were made by contractors who as late as my early days in Boston were still in business and of the highest reputation.

Neither of the reports, however, was accepted as the expense was deemed more than was wise to incur.

History repeated itself, however, and at the next session of the Legislature a single new Commissioner and a new architect were appointed. Certain internal alterations and improvements were authorized, an appropriation made and the work executed. The estimates were largely exceeded, a scandal was shown up and those involved were severely rebuked by the Governor;- not the first or the last time that proof has been shown that although "figures will not lie liars will figure."

In 1880 Mr. Esty with two other architects, Edward Clark and J. L. Smithmeyer, were appointed by a senatorial committee, of which the well-known Senator Voorhees was chairman, as a commission to consider and report as to the expediency of extending the United States Capitol so as to provide for the rapidly growing Congressional Library which was then located in the Capitol on its easterly side.

The Committee reported unanimously that in their opinion it was inexpedient if not impracticable to extend the Capitol as suggested without serious damage to its architectural proportions and its convenience for legislative purposes. The architects were then asked to make designs for a separate library building.

I do not know the exact process that followed. The result was that the plan submitted by Mr. Esty was accepted and "premiated" by the Committee who asked Mr. Esty to collaborate with Mr. Smithmeyer as to the exterior design.

This Mr. Esty refused to do. Unfortunately he had produced a design in the style that was living a short life in England, as typified by the Albert Memorial, an unfortunate and unskilful attempt to modernize the Gothic.

Mr. Esty declined to collaborate, but his plan was adopted, and was adapted by Messrs. Smithmeyer & Pelz to the simpler classic style, which of course was more harmonious with the public architecture of Washington. The result was the disappointment referred to in the early part of this paper.

Nevertheless the success of the building as a usefully planned and successful Library is due to Mr. Esty's plan, which without radical changes appears in the completed building.

At this time Mr. Esty was suffering from a mortal ailment, and he returned to his home in Framingham to live but a short time.

At this point I will insert a letter from Mr. Henry H. Kendall whom I have known and respected for many years, an Architect of eminence in Boston for whom the members of his profession have not only regard but also affection.

209 Columbus Avenue, Boston, Mass.

Mr. Frank A. Kendall,
5 Church Street,
Framingham, Mass.

My earliest remembrance of Alex R. Esty is of him as a member of the Boston Society of Architects who always paid his dues. In those days, in the depression which followed the activities after the Boston Fire, Architects were often hard put to meet the fees of membership in professional societies and I, as a student in an Architects' office, took the job of collecting them as a side line. Most offices then were up three or four flights of stairs and the current word was that on earth the Architect lived as near heaven as possible, being not too sure of a nearer position hereafter. Hence, the collector blessed the name of those who paid on the first call. I remember Mr. Hurd, who seemed to be the principal assistant, a very competent man, by the way.

My more intimate acquaintance began later when Mr. Esty was Superintendent of Construction for the addition to the Post Office Building facing on P. O. Square. The office of the Supervising Architect of the Treasury was undergoing one of the periodical investigations and John Frazer was Acting Supervising Architect.

On assuming office, he found himself in need of additional assistants and asked Mr. Esty to suggest some one. Just how my name came to his notice I am not sure, but some one mentioned it to him and he sent for me and offered me the chance. His recommendation was enough and with the help of such other sponsors as I could hastily get together I made a flying start in February 1879 and landed in Washington in time to draw pay for Washington's birthday, much to my surprise.

Mr. Esty's introductions and counsel brought me friends there at once and undoubtedly helped me greatly to get a standing.

My first work was on plans for the Boston building, already started, and the design (by Louis R. Rogers, then chief draughtsman, formerly of Bryant and Rogers of Boston) was decided upon but to me fell much of the detail of working drawings.

This brought me somewhat in close touch with the Superintendent of Construction and in my vacations I was often in his office and in touch with him. He was one of the old style of professional men, full of courtesy and consideration, whom it was always a pleasure to meet.

There was not much I could do for him. He did not need me but I wished I could do more. He once asked me to try and secure for him his premiated designs for the Congressional Library Competition. The great feature of the design was the circular, domed Reading Hall which was incorporated in the adopted designs but for which, so far as I know, he never received credit or acknowledgment. The authorities would not release the plans, however, and they never came back.

The news of Mr. Esty's death caused genuine regret in the office of the Supervising Architect and knowing my personal affection for him, I was permitted to attend the funeral, representing the office.

I came to Boston and Framingham, attended the services with the friends who so deeply mourned his passing but was not able to meet, at the time, any of the family.

In his passing the profession lost an honored member and a host of his friends a well loved and faithful comrade.

Sincerely yours,

Henry H. Kendall,

And now as to his individual practice as differentiated from his collaboration with others.

And first let me say a few words as to the difficulties of practise in those days as compared with conditions today. I shall name only one item out of many, the non-existence of blue prints or of any other time and money saving method of reproducing drawings.

Even in my own early days, forty years later than Mr. Esty's, only comparatively small drawings could be reproduced except by the laborious and expensive process of tracing. Such comparatively small prints as could be made were made by the office boy, who coated the paper in a dark room, hung it up to dry, tended the heavy frames on an extension of the window sill or on the roof; and it took from a quarter^{an} hour to nearly all day, depending on the sun, to produce a single print.

Today blue prints can be obtained from a printing office in from fifteen minutes up, depending only on the required number of each print.

Alexander Esty became of age in October 1847, when we may assume that his apprenticeship ended. In that year the third building of the First Parish was superseded by a Gothic building designed by Hammat Billings. It seems fair to assume that this building may have influenced the young architect in favor of the Gothic which he used in most of his churches, for in the following year, as has been stated, he remodelled the Hollis Evangelical Meeting House into the simple Gothic structure now known as Plymouth Church.

I will mention next the dwelling houses in Framingham only that Mr. Esty is known to have designed.

The David Fisk house, the home of the late Mrs. Sarah Fisk White. Mr. Esty's niece. Mrs. Stockwell, tells me that this was Mr. Esty's first house.

The house now owned by Mr. Wallace Nutting was thoroughly remodelled into its present condition by Mr. Esty for James Wilson Clark.

The George H. Weeks house, originally built by Charles Merriam for his daughter, Mrs. Francis Jaques.

The William H. Mellen House.

The house of the Rev. and Hon. Peter Parker at Salem End (I wonder whether that designation of the west part of the town is as familiar as it ought to be) built by Mr. Esty's brother-in-law, Mr. Phineas G. Rice, in 1867-8.

Mr. Esty's own house on High Street--destroyed when the speedway was built.

The Moses Ellis House now owned by Little Tree Farms (built by Mr. Rice)

The Hon. C. C. Esty house, on State St. where the Allyn family live.

The house on Union Avenue, long owned by Mr. F. J. Stevens, where Mr. Lowery now lives.

The Lorenzo Sabine house on Auburn St., next beyond Dr. A. K. Stone's was built by Dexter Esty about 1850. It may have been designed by his son, who was just beginning practise.

The house now owned by Mr. Charles A. Esty as originally built for Charles R. Train was of Mr. Esty's design, but it was so largely rebuilt after a disastrous fire that the original design is not apparent.

I have no doubt that there were other houses that should be recorded, but it would require considerable time to identify them.

Schools.

Most of Mr. Esty's schools have of course been superseded by others of a more modern type and conforming to the improved standards of present day practice.

Among the Schools designed by him are the following:-

Normal Schools in Framingham and Worcester, Mass.

Normal School dormitory in Westfield, Mass.

A group of buildings at Colby University in Waterville, Maine

Baptist Theological School in Newton, Mass.

A School building in Clinton, Mass.

Vermont University in Burlington, Vermont.

A group of buildings in Alton, Illinois for Shurtleff College.

This college was named in honor of Benjamin Shurtleff who had given a generous endowment. He was a cousin in an older generation of our townsman, the Rev. A.D. K. Shurtleff.

The first building of the University of Rochester, N.Y., which gave Mr. Esty a degree of Master of Arts.

City Buildings.

I find little record of the city buildings other than the churches. I am sure however that a number of such buildings were designed in his office, some of which were destroyed in the great fire.

The Monks Building at 35 Congress St. was built after the fire.

The Monks Building in South Boston still standing was also designed by Mr. Esty.

Some of his buildings were torn down after the advent of the steel frame made it possible to build much higher buildings in place of the older ones.

The Boston and Albany Station, still standing, but no longer used for its original purpose, was the last building that Mr. Esty designed.

And lastly we come to the churches of which there exists a longer list than of any other class, and most of which are still standing.

The remodelling that produced Plymouth has already been referred to.

In 1854 the Baptist Church in South Framingham was built, suggestive of the Romanesque.

In 1861 Emmanuel Church in Newbury St., Boston was built. It was afterwards enlarged by Francis R. Allen, an eminent architect, who paid Mr. Esty the high compliment of respecting the original design in every respect, repeating the detail, duplicating the entrances; -- a practice that is too little followed in treating a predecessor's design.

Other churches of Mr. Esty's design are as follows:-

1861 A Methodist Episcopal Church in Burlington, Vermont; Romanesque.

1866 The Church of Our Saviour, Longwood; Gothic. Built for the Lawrence family and considered one of Mr. Esty's best churches.

1866 Baptist Church in Rochester, New York.

1870 Baptist Church in North Billerica, Mass., for Gov. Talbot.

1868-9 Baptist Church in Upper Alton, Illinois.

1870 Congregational Church in Longmeadow, remodelled from a colonial to a Romanesque design. It is amusing to learn that only last year another architect remodelled it back again into a colonial building.

1872-3 St. Luke's Church, Episcopalian, East Greenwich, R. I. The tower was added later by another architect.

1870 St. John's Church, Framingham. English Gothic of a simple type. I shall speak of this again.

St. Marks Church, Southborough.

1876-8 Union Congregational Church, Corner of Columbus Ave. and West Newton St., Boston. Gothic.

The Harvard Church, Cambridge. Baptist. Gothic.

Mr. Ralph Adams Cram writes; "Esty's work like that of Haight and Congdon was an intelligent working out of the Gothic principles then being revived in England.

"As a citizen Mr. Esty was public spirited and took pride in the growth and increasing attractions of his native town. The satisfactory manner in which he and his performed their arduous and responsible duties as selectmen during the Civil War (during the latter part of which he was chairman of the board) were recognized by the Town at that time, by his election in 1866 as Representative in the General Court."

He served ten years as Trustee of the Edgell Grove Cemetery, taking great interest in its improvement and management, and he designed the entrance gateway.

I find warrants as "Justice of the Peace and Quorum."

In 1876 he was appointed (vice Gridley J.F. Bryant, resigned) Superintendent of the erection of the United States Post Office and Sub-Treasury Building in Boston.

In 1877 his duties were extended to the superintendence of all U.S. Construction in Boston and of the U.S. Marine Hospital in Chelsea.

In 1878 Governor Alexander H. Rice appointed him a member of the Board of Prisons in place of his friend Dr. Joseph Burnett of Southborough.

Mr. Esty was three times married; first to Julia M. Wight, of whose three children Mrs. Charles W. Emerson survives together with the latter's husband, four children and four grandchildren;-- second to Charlotte Louisa Blake;-- and third to Emma Corning Newell; of her three children (Blanche Newell, Marguerite and Harold Morton) the first named, now Mrs. Frank A. Kendall survives with her daughter, Margaret;-- also survive two children of Harold Morton Esty,-- Elberta Larkin and Harold Morton Junior.

I have mentioned St. Johns Church in Framingham among the churches that Mr. Esty designed. It deserves further notice because of his affection for it and for what it represented to him.

Services of the Episcopal Church were first introduced into Framingham in the "fifties".

Mrs. Stockwell kindly writes me:--

"The first service of the Episcopal Church was held one Sunday afternoon in the then "Hollis Evangelical Church". I myself was there in the Esty pew with "Aunt Julia" and Dr. Burnett. Later on the services were held in the Town Hall."

Mr. Esty was attracted by the services, his interest grew and when St. Johns Church was incorporated (in 1860) he was one of the incorporators and was elected as the first Junior Warden, an office which he held until his death in 1881, the first Senior Warden, Dr. James Watson Brown, having survived him.

Mr. Esty took great pains in designing the building and in superintending its erection, and contributed generously toward the cost of the site as well as toward the building and to its support. St. John's Church and its welfare became and remained one of the absorbing interests of his life.